DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 137 852 CS 501 660

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TITLE Communication in Education: A Workshop Design.
PUB DATE 77
NOTE 9p.; Report prepared at University of Missouri-Columbia

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication (Thought Transfer); Education Courses; Higher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; *Language Role; *Teacher Workshops

ABSTRACT

This paper describes the Communication in Education Workshop offered at the University of Colorado, outlines the procedures used in implementing the program, and makes recommendations for future implementation. The course was designed to allow each student to build an integrated unit of study, by providing fifteen two-hour minicourses from which each student could choose up to eight. The amount of credit was variable and could be assigned to either education or communication areas. The three-day workshop enrolled 155 teachers and administrators from elementary, secondary, and college levels. (AA)

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Communication in Education: A Workshop Design

by

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CS 501 660

A recent issue of Communication Education cited a workshop offered at the University of Colorado as being an innovative approach to communication education.[1] The purpose of this paper is to: (1) provide a description of the Communication in Education Workshop offered at the University of Colorado, (2) provide the procedures utilized in the implementation of the program, and (3) provide conclusions and recommendations for future implementation.

The Communication in Education Workshop was unique in many respects; however four innovations may have been keys to the overall success of the program. The initial concept was to develop a format that would allow each student to build an integrated unit of study or course by providing a number of mini-course offerings from which each student could choose. The workshop provided fifteen, two hour mini-courses. Each student could select a maximum of eight mini-courses from the total offerings. A second notion was to allow each student a choice about the amount of credit they wished to receive. Students could elect to receive two hours of graduate credit by enrolling in eight mini-courses. "The Teacher and the Communication Transaction" was required for all students enrolling for two hours credit. Students could also elect to receive one hour of graduate credit by enrolling in six mini-courses. In addition to mini-course enrollment the credit system was guaranteed through completion of a term paper assignment. A non-credit option was also provided. A third idea was to allow students the choice of assigning credit hour(s) to

either Education or Communication areas. The course was cross listed by both areas under a common number -- Communication/Education 539. A serendipitous idea, which proved to be of critical importance, was to provide this workshop within a compressed and intensive three day schedule. These concepts furnished the philosophy and direction for the workshop.

The following description of procedures supplies information found useful in the design and implementation of the Communication in Education Workshop. The procedures are not intended to be prescriptive but they reflect those procedures that "worked" in one workshop and reflect modifications based on post-workshop evaluations.

Universities vary in their requirements for the number of instructor contact hours required for one hour of credit. The prospective administrator of a credit producing workshop must determine the prevailing guidelines for credit/contact hour equivalency. In addition, investigation of University regulations regarding "special student" status is required. Teachers who elect to enroll for credit do not normally have current enrollment status in the University. Most University administrations have anticipated the potential for enrollment in short courses by providing a special application for admission. These applications should be secured and furnished to workshop applicants.

Liasion with departments or schools of Education is desired. Close cooperation between Education and Communication contributes to the ultimate success of the workshop. Of 155 participants in the Communication in Education Workshop, 113 choose to have the credit assigned to the School of Education. Further, professors from Education should be

encouraged to design mini-courses to be included in the total offering.

Faculty and graduate students from Communication and Education areas should be requested to submit short course proposals. Paragraph descriptions of courses, planned in-class activities, and reading lists should be provided with each course proposal. The administrator of the program selects about fifteen mini-courses for inclusion in the workshop. At this juncture the design and preparatory procedures for the variable credit/multiple mini-course workshop are essentially completed.

Advertising the workshop should be initiated at least two months in advance of the workshop application deadline. Advertising the workshop should be accomplished through utilization of all state wide educational media. Coordinators, superintendents and principals can normally be contacted through use of state education directories. Mailing lists may be obtained from the state Language Arts Society, School of Education, etc. State conventions are also useful in distributing workshop information. Finally advertising in local newspapers is advised. A comprehensive campaign for advertising and information dissemination seems essential. Whenever possible "request for further information" forms should be included in mailings and advertising copy.

Responses to requests for information might include the following:

(1) Introduction to the workshop format and instructions for enrollment.

(2) Summary of information and instructions for workshop participants.

(3) Paragraph descriptions of each mini-course with required reading lists and name of instructor.

(4) Biographical information about each instructor in the workshop.

(5) Precise description of and instructions for the credit enrollees project assignment.

(6) Tentative schedule of mini-courses and registration.

(7) Application for admission to "special student" status (or the equivalent) for credit enrollees.

(8) Workshop preregistration material. Preregistration material should include a form permitting each applicant to check primary minicourse choices. However, each applicant should also be required to check at least two mini-courses as second choices. This procedure is necessary because of the possibility a course might not have a sufficient number of preregistered participants to justify offering it.

Rapid response to applicants, acknowledging receipt of preregistration material, is highly recommended. After preregistration material is received a registration packet should be developed for each student. Each packet should be developed for each student. Each packet might contain a second copy of the instructions for completing the credit project assignment and the deadlines for submitting the completed project. For the convenience of workshop participants and planners, written projects should be mailed to the workshop director for subsequent dissimentation to appropriate sources. In addition to the project asignment, the packet should contain tuition receipt, schedule of courses and

room assignments, pre-workshop questionnaire and a post-workshop questionnaire. These packets should be distributed at registration prior to the beginning of the program. A registration desk should be set up in a central location and serve as a source of distribution for additional classroom material and general information during the entire conference.

The Communication in Education Workshop was highly successful. One hundred and fifty-five people enrolled for the three day workshop. The workshop was populated by an excellent cross section of teachers and administrators representing a broad spectrum of grade levels and subject matter. High school teachers represented 30 percent of the total enrollment; elementary and junior high teachers represented 55 percent; elementary, junior high and high school administrators represented 10 percent; and college and university teachers represented 5 percent. It was expected the population would be primarily composed of people with specific training in communication. However, only 12 percent of the participants were in Speech Communication or Speech and Drama; only 21 percent were in English. The remaining population (excluding the one-third who were elementary teachers) represented Literature and Language Arts, Art, Home Economics, Political Science, History, Math, Media, and Special Education.

The workshop generated a total of 279 credit hours for 155 participants. The total cost for generating 279 credit hours was approximately one-third of the total money earned through enrollment fees.

Perhaps the total experience was best summed up by one participant who wrote:

> It is now Sunday afternoon and I am totally exhausted. My saturation point has been reached and I am about to collapse under the weight of the hundreds of new ideas I have absorbed. The workshop has changed me and my teaching--but not in ways which my students will recognize tomorrow morning. Rather, I anticipate the change coming over the next few months as I analyze, synthesize and apply what I have now simply absorbed. But when I do and as I do, my students will know and so will I. Thank you for this wonderful experience.

Footnote

[1] Elizabeth Meagher Lynn, "In-Service Teacher Education in Classroom Communications" Communication Education, 26:1 (January, 1977), 1-13.